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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/829,364	04/09/2001	Steven B. Smith	9311.16	9690
21999	7590	04/13/2004	EXAMINER	
KIRTON AND MCCONKIE 1800 EAGLE GATE TOWER 60 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE P O BOX 45120 SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84145-0120			RUDY, ANDREW J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3627	

DATE MAILED: 04/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/829,364

Applicant(s)

SMITH ET AL.

Examiner

Andrew Joseph Rudy

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-65 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-65 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I, claims 1-11 in Paper No. 7 received February 2, 2004 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the restricted Groups I, II and IV-IX are species that are obvious variants of each other and not patentably distinct. This is not found persuasive because Group I does not require a computer to fully meet the claims 1-11 language. Further, the restriction requirement is not totally based upon a species requirement, but upon independent inventions. Applicant has argued both for no distinction of Group III from Groups II (page 3, paragraph 1) and a distinction for Group III from Groups I, II and IV-IX (page 3, paragraph 3). This is not convincing. Also, Applicant's assertion that "automatic adjustment cannot be practiced without a computer" is not correct in juxtaposition to the claim language presented.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

2. Claims 12-65 withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention/species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 7.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §101

3. Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth in a two-prong test of:

- (1) whether the invention is within the technological arts; and
- (2) whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must be within the technological arts. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e., abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject matter. For a process claim, the recited process must somehow apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

In the present case, claims 1-11 only recite an abstract idea. The recited steps of providing spending accounts, maintaining spending limits, allocating at least one transaction, and automatically adjusting virtual balances does not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. The terms "virtual" and "automatically" do not obviate this line of reasoning. These steps only constitute an idea of how to manage spending accounts.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1, line 8, "said spending accounts" lacks antecedent basis and is not clear which spending accounts, (the "virtual spending accounts" from claim 1, lines 3, 4 or "an appropriate virtual spending account" from line 6.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-11, as understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the "virtualpayroll.com" (hereafter "Virtual") article.

Virtual discloses an on-line job-based budget management of business time sheet invoices comprising providing virtual accounts, allocating at least one transaction and automatically adjusting balances. Virtual does not specifically disclose a plurality of virtual spending accounts displayed in graphical format. However, it was common knowledge at the time of Applicant's

invention to have provided virtual spending accounts and posting such accounting in graphical format. Further, businesses that have automatic payroll systems that Virtual is designed to work for do not normally have limitless spending accounts from which to pay its employees. That is, each business has a self-imposed accounting cap that it may draw its resources from in order to meet payroll transactions. As is, this may have been viewed as a form of a virtual spending account. Nonetheless, to have provided a plurality of virtual spending accounts displayed in graphical format and automatically adjusted a virtual balance of an allocated transaction would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. The motivation for doing such would have been to timely process payroll accounting in order to pay an entity money that may have been owed to it. Likewise to have provided purchase orders or a job quote in place of the time sheet invoices for Virtual would have been an obvious choice of design for one of ordinary skill in the art. Also, working off-line to complete the payroll was a time-honored practice prior to Virtual and to have provided such for Virtual would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

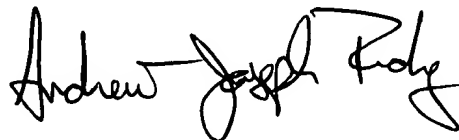
7. Further pertinent references of interest are noted on the attached PTO-892.
8. Applicant's two separate Information Disclosure Statements have been reviewed. Note the attached PTO-1449's.

Conclusion

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew Joseph Rudy whose telephone number is 703-308-7808. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday thru Friday, 7:30 a.m until 6 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Robert Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Joseph Rudy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A" and "R".